

# INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

Planning and instruction are integral components that are vital in influencing the teacher's success in the classroom. "Good teachers engage in considerable advance planning: They identify the knowledge and skills they want students to acquire, determine an appropriate sequence in which to teach such knowledge and skills, and develop classroom lessons and activities that will maximize learning and keep students motivated and on task" (Ormrod, 2011 pg 415).



Successful instructional planning consists of the following key elements:

- Instructional goals and objectives
- Task Analysis
- Instructional strategies
- Lesson plan development
- Classroom Management

Instructional goals and objectives must be identified. An instructional objective is the desired outcome of a lesson or unit, while the broader term, instructional goal, is the desired long-term outcome of instruction. These are the specific "things" that the students should accomplish during each lesson or unit, as well as those that the students should accomplish over the course of a semester or school year.

For teaching a complex topic or skill, a task analysis should be conducted to identify “the specific knowledge and behaviors necessary to master the subject matter” (Ormrod, 2011 pg 420). This task analysis can help guide the teacher to select the most appropriate methods as well as the sequence in which the subject matter should be taught. There are three types of task analysis - behavioral analysis (identify specific behaviors required to perform the task); subject matter analysis (breaking down the subject matter into specific topics, concepts and principles that it includes); and information processing analysis (specify the cognitive processes involved in a task).

Instructional strategies are utilized to promote understanding of the classroom subject matter material as well as to encourage students to think critically. There are many strategies that may be used. One currently common strategy is to teach fewer topics, but in greater depth: “Teach important topics in depth, with a focus on true understanding, not rote memorization” (Ormrod, 2011 pg 263). Other strategies are used to foster a classroom environment that encourages students to approach new ideas in a thoughtful, analytical, evaluative manner.



Once instructional goals and objectives of a subject matter have been determined and instructional strategies for executing such goals and objectives have been formalized, a lesson plan is then developed for use as a guide during instruction. A lesson plan typically includes - the goal or objective of the lesson; instructional materials; instructional strategies to be used as well as the sequence in which they will be used; and assessment methods that will be used to reveal how well the students are learning and achieving. Lesson plans should be adjusted as necessary based on how the students are progressing.

Classroom management is the establishment and maintenance of a classroom environment that is conducive to students' learning and achievement. Classroom management strategies are varied, from maintaining comfort in the environmental conditions of the classroom space itself (adequate light, heat, air conditioning, appropriate furnishings, decorations, etc.) to keeping students motivated to learn, managing student behavior and for determining the most effective, efficient use of time allotted for instruction. A well-managed classroom consists of students consistently engaged in learning activities and in which students' behaviors rarely interfere with achieving instructional goals.

In conclusion, instructional planning is most successful when used in conjunction with applicable classroom management strategies. Although there should be finite and comprehensive details included during the planning, plans should remain subject to adjustment based on the students' skill levels, knowledge and ability.

by Lorel Purcell, February 9, 2015

#### References:

Ormrod, Jeanne E. (2011) - Educational Psychology. Pearson Education, Inc. publishing as Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA; Seventh Edition.